

MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 5, 2020

TO: Planning Commission Working Group

FROM: Thomas Wysong, Senior Planner
Terry Costello, Deputy Zoning Administrator/Senior Planner

SUBJECT: Engage 2045 Comprehensive Plan Update, Economic Development Chapter

The Economic Development Chapter Technical Report, Technical Appendix, Community Guidance Update, Public Private Partnerships Briefing Paper, and the 2035 Adopted Goals, Strategies, and Actions (GSAs) are provided for the Planning Commission Working Group's (PCWG's) first review. This update includes the most recent and comprehensive data for economic development trends within James City County regarding employment, major employers, household income, and other important indicators of economic activity. Staff finds several important trends within this data. Notably, the proportion of tax revenues attributed to the 10 largest businesses/industries has been gradually diminishing over the last 16 years, as the business tax base experienced diversification during this time. Furthermore, establishments with between one and four employees represent the largest number of business establishments within the County, and the proportion of businesses this size has seen the largest increases in recent years.

The PCWG had an initial discussion about chapter topics on May 6, 2020. The topics for Economic Development from that meeting are listed below, along with the information provided in the technical report or other attachments.

- **Public Private Partnerships:** Staff has worked with the Office of Economic Development and the Neighborhood Development Division to prepare a Public Private Partnerships briefing paper. This is included as Attachment No. 3, and includes some specific questions seeking further PCWG guidance.
- **Information about what jobs/businesses the County is seeking to attract:** A new section was added to summarize information from the Greater Williamsburg Target Sector Analysis. This section replaces the older text describing the Business Climate Task Force.
- **Details on technical education offerings:** Some additional details regarding current efforts to increase access to technical education options have been included in the Region Efforts section of the text.
- **Explore park and walk district concepts:** To date, this topic has been among staff's considerations in the scenario modeling effort, particularly with regard to a potential emphasis on mixed used place types. Potentially, such concepts could be further examined in terms of the land use map and the character design guidelines that will be developed. Staff has not currently added draft text regarding this topic to this chapter, but welcomes further PCWG guidance.
- Two other topics that were discussed were related to **future trends for retail**, both in terms of brick-and-mortar stores versus online sales (including pandemic-related changes in buying habits), and in terms of recent changes to the minimum wage. Much of the data available to staff to update this chapter is from 2019 and likely does not reflect the more recent implications of the pandemic or of the minimum wage change; however, staff will continue to monitor data sources and other sources of information and will update the PCWG if possible. Staff also welcomes additional PCWG guidance on these topics.

Community Guidance

Community Guidance is the document that summarizes the public input related to the Economic Development Chapter that has been received to date in the scientific survey and the first round of community engagement (see Attachment No. 2). A second round of community engagement is on-going and a third round of community engagement is tentatively planned for December/January. As the results of the upcoming community meetings become available, staff will update the Community Guidance document for review by the PCWG. It is intended that a summary of all the community guidance will be included within the chapter text for the final version.

GSAs

For this initial review, staff has not revised the Goals, Strategies, and Actions that were adopted for the *Toward 2035 Leading the Way* Comprehensive Plan (see Attachment No. 4). Staff is currently beginning to examine potential revisions to the GSAs and has tentatively identified some actions to be potentially revised. Members of the PCWG are welcome to provide initial suggestions and comments regarding the revision of the GSAs.

In addition, the third round of public engagement will be an opportunity to ask the public a limited number of implementation-focused questions that may help the PCWG provide guidance on Economic Development Chapter GSA revisions. At its May 6, 2020 meeting, the PCWG had previously indicated several potential questions:

- What does the community support as far as priorities for Economic Development?
- What parts of our Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map are at odds with citizen wishes?
- What other types of new revenue streams from an Economic Development standpoint would be welcome here in the County? How would County citizens prefer for staff go about developing that (perhaps technology parks) to foster/promote revenue streams that are less reactive to economic downturns?

One other potential question suggested by the consultant team is:

- Public input on the type of jobs and businesses the County would like to attract in the future.

As noted above, only a limited number of questions can be included in questionnaires, and staff seeks any PCWG feedback on what two or three key questions might be either from the list above or based on more recent PCWG review of the attached documents.

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Attachments:

1. Draft Economic Development Chapter Technical Report
2. Draft Economic Development Chapter Community Guidance
3. Draft Economic Development Chapter Public Private Partnerships Briefing Paper
4. Existing Economic Development Chapter GSAs